

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000263

SIPDIS

STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA
LONDON PASS TO AMBASSADOR CAMPBELL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/20/2016

TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [KHLs](#) [PINR](#) [ETRD](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: HOSTAGE-TAKING, SITREP #5

REF: LAGOS 252 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

Hostage Welfare Update

1. (C) A reliable contact reported to Shell hostage Macon Hawkins was "presenting difficulties," and we infer this to mean that he was beginning to show signs of diabetic complications. Willbros is attempting to contact Hawkins' doctor to obtain a more complete assessment of his medical history and the severity of his diabetes. Taken during the January hostage crisis, AmCit Patrick Landry said he never received the blood pressure medication dispatched to the kidnappers for him. We have no confirmation that medicines sent for the hostages have been delivered.

2. (C) Biodun Orebiyi, Secretary General of the Nigerian Red Cross (NRC), said Delta State has requested NRC help to deliver food, water, and medicine to the hostages. Orebiyi claimed he was informed the hostages have been divided into groups and are being held at four different but adjacent locations near the border between Bayelsa and Delta States.

3. (C) We are attempting to confirm reports that traditional Ijaw elder Chief E.K. Clarke has been appointed by Delta Governor Ibori to lead a hostage negotiating team. A Shell source reports Governor Ibori said Government Ekpemupolo is behind the kidnapping, and Ibori is seeking to engage him. Shell sources continue to place the hostages in Nkeronkoko or the immediate vicinity. Other Delta sources said the hostages would not be released to Governor Ibori as Ibori is an Urhobo, not an Ijaw. Any release will be to representatives of Bayelsa State Governor Goodluck Jonathan, who is Ijaw. (Comment: This conflicts with information from other sources that the kidnappers dislike Governor Jonathan because of his perceived role in the ousting of his predecessor a few months ago. While the group may not be enamored with Ibori, they likely are not prone toward Jonathan. However, Goodluck did reportedly hand over 100 million naira to end the January crisis, so the kidnappers may desire another dose of Bayelsa largesse. End comment.)

Energy Update: Shell Facilities Still Closed

4. (C) Shell reported threats against barges near Bonny, in Rivers State. Forcados, "Sea Eagle," and other Shell facilities are still not operational, and security concerns have delayed a damage assessment of the Forcados terminal. Shell reports production is reduced by approximately 550,000 bpd.

5. (C) Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) Managing Director Engineer Makoju confirmed PHCN has lost 850 MW, or 26% of the country's power, due to damaged gas pipelines. Damage to the Escravos-Lagos line has reduced production at the Egbin and Delta power plants, while damage to a pipeline last week in Rivers State slowed production at the Akpan power plant.

6. Shell has closed Osubi airstrip in Warri due to security concerns. Commercial carriers have temporarily suspended flights to Warri.

New Group, New Threats

7. (C) A new group calling itself Toru-Paka Minafa Brigade, or Martyrs' Brigade, released a statement threatening attacks in Lagos and Abuja. Brigade spokeswoman Cynthia Whyte, previously a spokeswoman for Dokubo Asari's Niger Delta Peoples' Volunteer Force, called on all foreigners to leave the Niger Delta immediately or be subject to "open pain

cheques."

18. (C) False reports of former Bayelsa Governor Alamiyeseigha's death have begun to spread, causing some tension in Bayelsa. GON contacts have been advised to publicly refute these inaccurate reports. (Comment: Before his impeachment Alamiyeseigha was viewed in many circles as the most powerful political figure in the Ijaw ethnic group. He also had a cordial relationship with many of the Ijaw militant organizations in the Delta. His death could cause tension to escalate appreciably and swiftly. End comment.)

19. (C) The Itsikiri National Congress (INC) released a statement demanding the Ijaws limit their attacks around Escravos to facilities on their ethnic lands. Ijaw militants reportedly planned a second attack on an Escravos pipeline, but were met by Itsikiri youths who told them to vacate their community. (Comment: If true, this incident shows that the level of agitation in the Delta is reaching a higher pitch. End comment.)

Military Activity; Militant Attack Repulsed

10. (C) Militants mounted a small attack on a JTF military position outside Forcados. Military sources say one attacker was killed and two were captured. A FNDIC source, confirming the ruction, reports one killed, one captured. The JTF is in a heightened alert status in case the attack was preliminary to something larger.

11. (S) Shell Executive Vice President Anne Pickard met President Obasanjo yesterday. According to Pickard, Obasanjo spoke liberally with invectives about the hostage-taking. Obasanjo also underscored his determination to forcibly end oil bunkering. (Comment: If Pickard is right, President Obasanjo may be attempting to draw an intellectual distinction between the militants and bunkerers in that area. In reality, this may be a distinction without a difference. Most militants engage in bunkering. Should the GON launch operations in the area under the guise of attacking bunkering, the militants will be ill-amused. An untimely "law enforcement" action could rekindle the situation and place the hostages in jeopardy. End comment.)

Consular Update

12. (C) All Consular staff are accounted for. There have been no reports of additional attacks on AmCits.
BROWNE